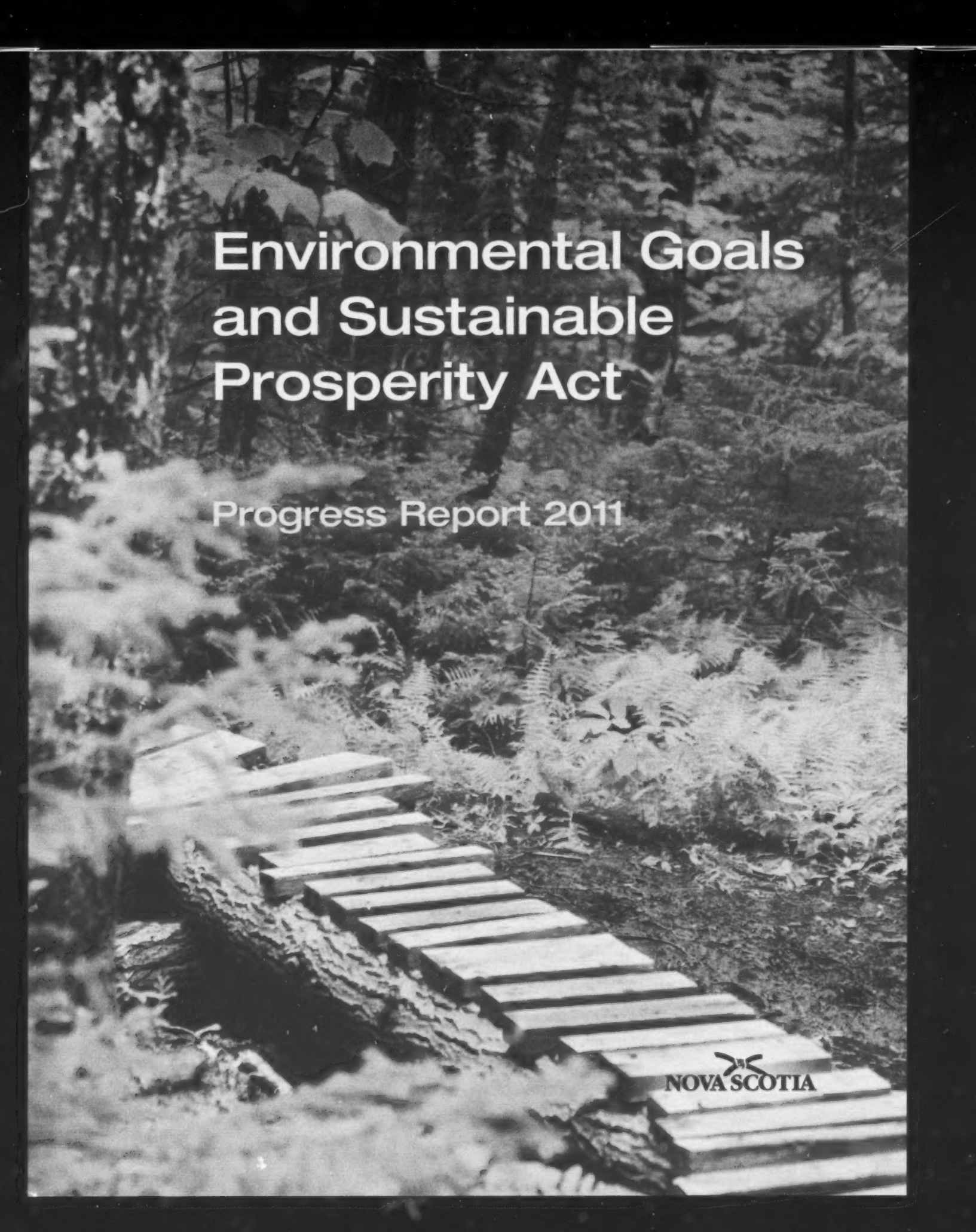
Environmental Goals
and Sustainable
Prosperity Act
Progress Report 2011
NOVA SCOTIA

Environmental Goals and Sustainable Prosperity Act

Progress Report 2011

NOVA SCOTIA

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Message from the Minister

We are pleased to present a report for 2010–2011 on the Environmental Goals and Sustainable Prosperity Act.

The Act is one of several guiding pieces of legislation that will help us create one of the most environmentally sustainable and healthiest environments in the world, while growing our economy.

Nova Scotia Environment, along with our government partners and stakeholders, continues to make progress toward reaching — and even exceeding — our legislated targets. Greenhouse gas and air pollution emissions have been lowered, we have tabled a water strategy to preserve our water resources, and we have continued the process of legally protecting 12 per cent of our land by 2015. Government has also reduced its own impact on the environment through the *Anti-Idling Act* and by investing in retrofits of government-owned buildings to lower our contribution to greenhouse gas and air pollution emissions.

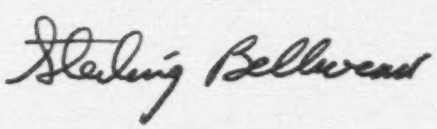
The ecoNova Scotia program completed its mandate in 2011. Funding through this program helped communities throughout the province reduce greenhouse gas and air pollution emissions while growing our clean technology sector. The 140 projects are expected to achieve an estimated 241,000 tonnes of greenhouse gas reductions, and lower air pollution emissions by 1.2 million kilograms annually by 2020.

Ensuring a sustainable future for Nova Scotia also means creating good jobs and growing the economy. Through jobsHere, government's plan to grow the economy, we are investing in companies such as DSME Trenton and LED Roadway Lighting Ltd., who help create hundreds of skilled jobs in clean energy.

Earlier this year, we launched a $24 million provincial Clean Technology Fund that will provide better access to capital for Nova Scotian companies operating in this rapidly evolving global sector. The province is also actively incorporating sustainable procurement criteria into our tendering processes.

I am looking forward to continued success in the next year as our Department carries out its work of creating a healthy environment, vibrant communities, and thriving economy.

We need the support of all Nova Scotians to reach our environmental goals. This will benefit our province today and for future generations.



The Honourable Sterling Belliveau,
Minister of Environment

Introduction

The Environmental Goals and Sustainable Prosperity Act (EGSPA) is a unique piece of legislation which recognizes the importance of integrating environmental sustainability and economic prosperity. The legislation sets out 21 goals and two overarching objectives that are to be reached by 2020. This report provides an assessment of the progress made in achieving the goals over the last year. Throughout the year, government has continued to move forward and has made significant gains. To date, the province has achieved 10 of the 21 goals and has made significant progress toward achieving the others. Government and others continue working toward all remaining goals. A few highlights are profiled here and an update on the progress made toward achieving each target is found in the pages that follow.

Progress Highlights 2010

Water is an important resource for our province. To ensure the protection and proper management of our water resources the Province released *Water for Life: Nova Scotia's Water Resource Management Strategy* in December 2010.

Continued efforts have been made to address the greenhouse gases (GHG) and air pollution targets in EGSPA. The air quality targets for nitrogen oxide, airbourne fine-particulate matter and ground level ozone have all been met. In addition, standards for GHG emissions from new motor vehicles have been adopted by the Government of Canada for the 2011 to 2016 model years, with more work ongoing.

Significant achievements have also been made for renewable energy. In April 2010, the Department of Energy released its Renewable Electricity Plan with a renewable electricity target of 25 per cent by 2015 and a new target of 40 per cent by 2020. In 2010, Nova Scotia Power Inc (NSPI) and independent power producers added 130 MW of new renewable resources to the Nova Scotia system. In addition, Emera and NSPI signed an agreement to develop a link to Churchill hydro power by 2017. This new link could reduce greenhouse gas emissions by up to 16 megatonnes each year.

EGSPA Objectives

In addition to the 21 environmental goals, the Act emphasizes the importance of integrating environmental sustainability and economic prosperity through two high-level objectives (see text box, next page). To track how we are doing in achieving these objectives a set of high level indicators of prosperity have been developed. These indicators track trends over time in Nova Scotia and across Canada. More details on the indicators of prosperity are available in a separate report at www.gov.ns.ca/nse.

4(1) The long-term environmental and economic objective of the Province is to fully integrate environmental sustainability and economic prosperity and to this end to:

4(1)(a) demonstrate international leadership by having one of the cleanest and most sustainable environments in the world by the year 2020

4(1)(b) provide certainty to all sectors of the economy through the Government's economic development strategy entitled Opportunities for Sustainable Prosperity and establish clear environmental goals while improving the Province's economic performance to a level that is equal to or above the Canadian average by the year 2020.

Looking Forward

The Act states that the Minister's Round Table on Environment and Sustainable Prosperity will conduct a public review of EGSPA every five years. Planning has begun for the first review which is scheduled to take place in 2012. The review will provide an opportunity to amend the Act to reflect new environmental standards and economic objectives to ensure that we are on a path to achieving sustainable prosperity.

The Goals

4(2) To achieve the long-term objectives set forth in subsection one, the Province's environmental and economic goals are to ensure **1) a sustainable environment** and **2) economic prosperity**.

1. Sustainable Environment

AIR QUALITY

Doing our part to fight climate change and improve the air we breathe.

Goal	Emissions of nitrogen oxides will be reduced by 20 per cent by the year 2009 relative to emissions in the year 2000.[1]
Where are we now?	The nitrogen oxides (NO_X) emissions reported for 2010 met and surpassed the reduction target, with 31.8 per cent below 2000 NO_X levels. Compared with 36.1 per cent in 2009 and 3.2 per cent in 2007, when EGSPA came into effect.
What's next?	• Work with Nova Scotia Power Inc. (NSPI) to ensure the target continues to be met and to establish in-stack limits. • Participate in national efforts to establish emission requirements for the electricity sector. • Reductions have been added to the Air Quality Regulations for 2015 (25 per cent reduction from 2000) and 2020 (44 per cent reduction from 2000).

GOAL ✔✔ EXCEEDED

Goal	The Province will adopt emissions standards for greenhouse gases and air pollutants from new motor vehicles, such as the standards adopted by the State of California by the year 2010.
Where are we now?	On October 1, 2010, the Government of Canada announced Passenger Automobile and Light Truck Greenhouse Gas Emission Regulations (under CEPA) for vehicles in the 2011–2016 model years. Environment Canada is consulting on future regulations. Canada's heavy-duty vehicle regulations will be aligned with those of the United States.
What's next?	Continue to work with federal/provincial/territorial governments on national standards.

GOAL ✔ ACHIEVED

1 This target was originally established by the New England Governors and Eastern Canadian Premiers and set in the *Air Quality Regulations* in 2005 under the *Environment Act*.

AIR QUALITY (continued)

Goal	The Province will meet the Canada-wide standard established by the Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment for ground-level ozone by the year 2010.
Where are we now?	The Canada-wide standard for ground-level ozone is consistently being met for the Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM) and Cape Breton Regional Municipality (CBRM).
What's next?	Continue to implement the Canada-wide standard plan.

GOAL ✔ ACHIEVED

Goal	Sulphur dioxide emissions will be reduced by 50 per cent by the year 2010 from sources existing in 2001.[2]
Where are we now?	As shown below, total sulphur dioxide (SO_2) emissions have been consistently declining. The complete data for 2010 will be available in the fall of 2011, however emissions from Nova Scotia Power Inc. (NSPI), which accounted for 78 per cent of total emissions in 2009, have been recorded as 61,904 tonnes.
What's next?	• Work with NSPI to ensure they do not exceed their SO_2 limit. • Participate in national work to establish emission requirements for the electricity sector. • Assess the effectiveness of our efforts to reduce SO_2 by end of 2011. • Reductions have been added to the Air Quality Regulations for 2015 (58 per cent reduction from 2001) and 2020 (75 per cent reduction from 2001).

Sulphur Dioxide Emissions

2001	164,000 tonnes	base year
2007	123,645 tonnes	25% reduction
2008	124,300 tonnes	24% reduction
2009	129,325 tonnes	21% reduction
2010	available in fall 2011	

GOAL ✔ ACHIEVED

2 This target was originally established by the New England Governors and Eastern Canadian Premiers and set into the *Environment Act*.

AIR QUALITY (continued)

Goal

The Province will meet the Canada-wide standard established by the Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment for airborne fine-particulate matter by the year 2010.

Where are we now?

The Canada-wide standard for airborne fine-particulate matter ($PM_{2.5}$) has consistently been met in the Halifax Regional Municipality. While it is expected that Cape Breton Regional Municipality is also meeting the standard, results cannot be calculated at the present time due to insufficient data.

Ambient Particulate Matter In HRM:*

2005–07	16 $\mu g/m^3$
2006–08	15 $\mu g/m^3$
2007–09	13 $\mu g/m^3$
2008–10	16 $\mu g/m^3$

* Target is 30 $\mu g/m^3$ or less (based on three-year average).

GOAL ✓ ACHIEVED

What's next?

- Continue the work to implement the Canada-wide standard plan.
- Continue to work with national committees to improve monitoring.

Goal

Mercury emissions will be reduced by 70 per cent by the year 2010 relative to pre-2001 levels.[3]

Where are we now?

Mercury emissions (Hg) for 2010 were 81.5 kg or 64 per cent below the 2001 levels. On December 9, 2010, the Province announced that it would amend the Air Quality Regulations to defer the emission target until 2014 to limit the impact on power costs. Permitted emissions levels will continue to decline from 2010 to 2013. Nova Scotia Power Inc. (NSPI) will also be required to make additional emission reductions by 2020 to offset any emissions over 65 kg in the 2010–13 period.

NSPI submitted a plan to reach its targets and the Province is preparing a response.

Mercury Emissions from Electrical Power Generation

2000	227 kg	base year
2007	157 kg	30% reduction
2008	162 kg	28% reduction
2009	140 kg	38% reduction
2010	81.5 kg	64% reduction

MODIFIED GOAL IN PROGRESS

What's next?

Work with NSPI to reduce its mercury emissions.

3 This target was initially set in a Canada-wide standard established by the Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment.

AIR QUALITY (continued)

Goal

Greenhouse gas emissions will be at least 10 per cent below the levels that were emitted in the year 1990 by the year 2020, as outlined in the New England Governors and Eastern Canadian Premiers Climate Change Action Plan of 2001.

Where are we now?

Nova Scotia's greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions are declining. In 2009, our GHG emissions were 21.0 Mtonnes, which is 10.5 per cent above the 1990 baseline. This is a major improvement from our peak year (2004) when emissions were 22.6 per cent above the 1990 baseline.

Greenhouse Gas Emissions

1990	19.0 Mtonnes	base year
2004	23.3 Mtonnes	22.6% above
2005	22.3 Mtonnes	14.8% above
2006*	20.7 Mtonnes	8.9% above
2007	21.4 Mtonnes	12.6% above
2008	21.7 Mtonnes	14.2% above
2009	21.0 Mtonnes	10.5% above
2010	available in 2012	

* In 2006, the province's largest electricity consumer was closed for most of the year. Therefore, emissions for this year were lower than average.

GOAL IN PROGRESS

What's next?

- Implement the Climate Change Action Plan and the Cleaner Energy Strategy.
- Improve GHG efficiency in government buildings and transportation.
- Reduce emissions from transportation through education and the promotion of public and active transportation.
- Educate the public and strengthen building codes to save energy.
- Increase conversions to natural gas.

CONTAMINATED SITES

Building our economy by renewing our land.

Goal	Regulatory tools that use the framework within the *Environment Act* to stimulate redevelopment of contaminated land and contribute to economic development while protecting the environment will be developed by the year 2010.
Where are we now?	Public and targeted stakeholder consultations were held on the draft contaminated sites regulations and standards in 2010 and 2011. Development of the regulations is ongoing. It is expected that they will be released in 2011.
What's next?	Develop and release the contaminated sites regulations in 2011.

GOAL IN PROGRESS

ECOSYSTEM PROTECTION

Protecting our most valuable assets — our natural resources.

Goal

12 per cent of the total land mass of the province will be legally protected by the year 2015.

Where are we now?

As shown below, considerable progress has been made to conserve privately owned land since EGSPA came into effect. As of December 31, 2010, a total of 8.6 per cent of the province was legally protected.

Total Hectares of Land Protected

2007	451,016 hectares	8.2%
2008	456,160 hectares	8.2%
2009	474,800 hectares	8.5%
2010	475,000 hectares	8.6%

GOAL IN PROGRESS

What's next?

- Review and research candidate areas.
- Develop consultation, outreach, and educational materials.
- Launch planning and consultation process.
- Develop and implement protected areas plan.
- Partner with land trusts and landowners.
- Acquire and designate lands by 2015.

ECOSYSTEM PROTECTION (continued)

Goal	The Province will adopt strategies to ensure the sustainability of the Province's natural capital in the areas of forestry, mining, parks, and biodiversity by the year 2010.
Where are we now?	The final process for developing the Natural Resources Strategy began in May 2010. Work on a draft strategy is ongoing.
What's next?	• Continue the development of the Natural Resources Strategy considering all feedback received. • Finalize and release a Natural Resources Strategy. • Ensure that the Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq, citizens, and stakeholders are aware of the Strategy. • Implement the Strategy in collaboration with internal and external partners.

GOAL IN PROGRESS

ENERGY EFFICIENT BUILDINGS

Saving money and energy in our buildings at work, home, and play.

Goal	All new residential dwelling units constructed in the Province will be required to achieve an EnerGuide rating of 80 or meet energy conservation measures adopted in the Nova Scotia Building Code Regulations made under the *Building Code Act* after January 1, 2011.
Where are we now?	Energy efficiency amendments were made to the *Building Code Act* in December 2009: one year earlier than required. These new energy efficiency standards exceed the EGSPA target. They apply to new home construction, home additions, and major renovations, as well as commercial buildings under 600 square metres. All manufactured housing products meet or exceed the energy conservation measures. The EnerGuide rating of 80 is being met through either performance or prescriptive options.
What's next?	• Provide guidance to Natural Resources Canada on their proposed new EnerGuide Rating System. • Provide guidance to the Canadian Commission on Building and Fire Codes on their proposed energy conservation measures for Housing and Small Buildings. • Adopt the National Energy Code for Large Buildings in 2012–13. • Continue to enforce the current energy requirements.

GOAL ✓✓ EXCEEDED

ENERGY EFFICIENT BUILDINGS (continued)

Goal	All new residential dwelling units constructed in the Province that are within the scope of Part 9 of the National Building Code of Canada will be required to display an EnerGuide rating by the year 2008.
Where are we now?	Following consultation with stakeholders, mandatory labeling of new homes has been replaced with a choice of either performance-based or prescriptive energy efficiency requirements that were adopted in the Provincial Building Code on December 31, 2009. These requirements apply to both new single family homes and all small buildings built under Part 9 of the National Building Code.
What's next?	Replace the current Part 10 requirements of the Nova Scotia Building Code with the new National Energy Code for Houses and Small Buildings, once the latter has been finalized and enacted.

GOAL ✔ ACHIEVED

Goal	A government facility will be constructed as a demonstration facility in accordance with a leading standard for building energy efficiency and sustainability, such as the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design standard, by the year 2015.
Where are we now?	Government partnered with the Nova Scotia Community College to construct the Centre for the Built Environment which opened in 2010 at the Waterfront Campus in Dartmouth. The College is seeking Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Gold status for this building. The Province has also made additional progress, such as adopting LEED standards for all new school construction and government buildings. Building projects receiving financial support from government must also meet energy efficiency and water conservation standards.
What's next?	The application for LEED Gold has been submitted and is pending Canadian Green Building Council approval.

GOAL ✔ ACHIEVED

RENEWABLE ENERGY

Tapping into nature's source of energy.

Goal	18.5 per cent of the total electricity needs of the Province will be obtained from renewable energy sources by the year 2013.
Where are we now?	In April 2010, the Department of Energy released its Renewable Electricity Plan and through stakeholder consultation developed regulations that came into effect in October 2010. This included such commitments as the development of a Community Feed-in Tariff (COMFIT), a renewable electricity target of 25 per cent by 2015, and a new target of 40 per cent by 2020. In 2010, Nova Scotia Power Inc. (NSPI) and independent power producers added approximately 130 MW of new renewable resources to the NS system. This included Nuttby, Digby, Point Tupper, and Glen Dhu. As a result of these actions, Nova Scotia has been steadily increasing its supply of renewable energy. In 2010, 13.5 per cent of electricity generation was from renewable energy resources.
What's next?	• Enforce Renewable Energy Standard Regulations with specific renewable energy targets. • Support efforts by NSPI to acquire renewable energy supplies. • Continue the tidal energy demonstration project on the Bay of Fundy. • Continue to research and encourage investment in electricity from renewable energy sources.

Renewable Energy Sources*

2007	8.4%
2008	11%
2009	11.3%
2010	13.5%

* Revised based on load and generation.

GOAL IN PROGRESS

SOLID WASTE

Continuing to be an international leader in solid waste management.

Goal	The solid-waste disposal rate will be no greater than 300 kilograms per person per year by the year 2015 through measures that include the development of new programs and product stewardship regulations.
Where are we now?	Currently there are 17 materials banned from disposal in Nova Scotia and eight product stewardship agreements. In 2010, Nova Scotia's disposal rate was 401 kg/person, down from 417 kg/person in 2009.

Solid Waste Disposal Rate*

2007	477 kg/person
2008	429 kg/person
2009	417 kg/person
2010	401 kg/person

* Source: Nova Scotia Environment solid waste data call.

What's next?

- Release and implement an enhanced solid waste resource management framework.
- Research options and alternatives to minimize waste disposal, increase product stewardship and economic efficiency of solid waste resource management.
- Consult with key stakeholders including business and industry, municipalities, and Resource Recovery Fund Board.

GOAL IN PROGRESS

SUSTAINABLE PURCHASING

Leading the way in the purchase of environmentally and socially responsible goods and services.

Goal	A sustainable procurement policy for the Province will be developed and adopted by the year 2009.
Where are we now?	The Sustainable Procurement Policy was approved and released August 20, 2009, and implementation is ongoing. A Sustainable Procurement area has been established on the Government Tenders website and resources are added to the site as they become available. In May 2011, a new Public Procurement Act and Governance Model was enacted for Nova Scotia. This legislation is designed to facilitate greater standardization and harmonization among the NS public sector and result in improved collaboration, knowledge sharing, and adoption of best practices. This new legislation continues the provincial government direction of sustainable procurement. It is anticipated that greater collaboration among the NS public sector will enhance the implementation of sustainable procurement and will create more consistent requirements for vendors.
What's next?	• Sustainable Procurement criteria are being added to government tenders on a category-by-category basis, beginning with government-wide standing offers for goods and services. • Vendor education and staff training is ongoing to ensure that purchasers and vendors are aware of the new requirements. • Procurement Services is also improving the sustainability of its own operations by moving to online training delivery and the use of electronic communication and tools where possible.

GOAL ✔ ACHIEVED

WATER QUALITY

Protecting, restoring, and managing our valuable water resources.

Goal	A comprehensive water resource management strategy will be developed by the year 2010.
Where are we now?	*Water for Life: Nova Scotia's Water Resource Management Strategy* was released on December 16, 2010. Implementation of the strategy is ongoing.
What's next?	• Complete the Water Strategy Implementation Plan in the spring of 2011, and work with all levels of government and community to implement the strategy. • Continue to coordinate with other government strategies (i.e. coastal, natural resources).

GOAL ✔ ACHIEVED

WATER QUALITY (continued)

Goal	Wastewater treatment facility discharges will be provided at least primary treatment by the year 2017.
Where are we now?	As of March 2011, 129 of the 141 (91 per cent) municipal wastewater facilities met the target of providing primary wastewater treatment. This is up from March 2010, when 127 of the 141 (90 per cent) met the target.
What's next?	• Consult with municipalities on any issues. • Implement the Canada-wide Municipal Wastewater Effluent Strategy. • Assist municipalities in seeking funding for necessary system upgrades.

GOAL IN PROGRESS

Goal	Septage treatment facilities will be operated in accordance with the Guidelines for the Handling, Treatment, and Disposal of Septage by the year 2011.
Where are we now?	As of December 2010, 16 sites (70 per cent) met the guidelines and were issued long-term approvals or had closed. Seven sites (30 per cent) still needed further upgrades and were given temporary approvals. At the end of 2009, 15 sites (56 per cent) had completed the majority of required upgrades and/or closed in accordance with the guidelines.
What's next?	• Research and encourage new technologies. • Monitor sites to ensure upgrades are being completed. • Investigate sites that are behind schedule, and take necessary enforcement measures. • Ensure major construction/upgrades are completed before the 2011 target deadline.

GOAL IN PROGRESS

WATER QUALITY (continued)

Goal	Municipal public drinking water supplies will meet the Province's treatment standards by the year 2008.
Where are we now?	As of March 31, 2011, 75 per cent of the municipal public drinking water supplies met the treatment standards, which is an increase of 10 per cent from last year. Some municipalities have not yet met the standard due to challenges such as land acquisition delays, groundwater study requirements, construction delays, and cost overruns. The Province has been making progress toward this target by working with the municipalities to help them overcome these challenges in meeting the standard.
What's next?	• Assist municipalities to obtain the necessary funding to make upgrades. • Work with municipalities to develop drinking water treatment compliance strategies. • Help municipalities to comply with standards. • Conduct regular audits of public drinking water supplies to ensure standards are met.

Percentage of Facilities in Compliance

2007–08	50%
2008–09	59%
2009–10	65%
2010–11	75%

GOAL IN PROGRESS

Goal	A policy of preventing net loss of wetlands will be established by the year 2009.
Where are we now?	Development of a Wetland Conservation Policy is ongoing. In preparation for the release of the policy, a variety of tools to promote wetland conservation are being developed. These tools include: a functional evaluation approach for assessors; a wetland indicator plant list (already available); background information on wetland types in Nova Scotia; fact sheets for landowners, farmers, developers and land-use planners; and an online field guide to wetlands and wetland plants in Nova Scotia. In addition, work is also being done to develop courses on wetland delineations and functional assessments through Fernhill Institute/Acadia University and a vernal pool mapping and monitoring project has been initiated.
What's next?	Finalize the policy and begin implementation.

GOAL IN PROGRESS

2. Economic Prosperity

The following table highlights some of the key initiatives underway that create jobs and improve our economic performance while increasing our environmental sustainability.

PROJECT	DESCRIPTION
Clean Technology Fund	This fund will support the development, demonstration, commercialization, and implementation of innovative clean technologies. **Potential Benefits** • Help to grow the cleantech sector, which creates high value 'green' jobs • Support the development of new products for the province and for export
Community Based Feed-in Tariff (COMFIT)	This feed-in tariff encourages the development of local renewable energy projects by universities, municipalities, First Nations, co-operatives, non-profit groups, and community economic-development corporations. **Potential Benefits** • Improve the diversity of our renewable electricity supply • Improve our energy security
Lower Churchill Falls Project	This hydroelectric project is estimated to generate over 3,000 megawatts of local, renewable energy. This estimate is based on the development of Muskrat Falls in Phase I (approximately 824 MW) and the future development of Gull Island in Phase II (approximately 2,250 MW). **Potential Benefits** • Reduce greenhouse gas emissions by up to 16 megatonnes each year if both projects move forward • Reduce the impacts of climate change • Improve our energy security
Renewable Electricity Plan	This plan sets out a detailed program to move Nova Scotia away from carbon-based electricity towards greener, more local sources. By 2015, 25 per cent of Nova Scotia's electricity will be supplied by renewable energy sources, and will increase to 40 per cent by 2020. **Potential Benefits** • Improve the diversity of our renewable electricity supply • Improve our energy security

PROJECT	DESCRIPTION
Strategic Investments	The Province has strategically invested in funding companies that provide both economic and environmental benefits. **Examples** • Wind turbine production plant — DSME • Long life, low energy street lighting fixtures — LED Roadway Lighting • Scale up and exporting of wind turbines — Seaforth Energy • Sustainable development of aquaculture — Sustainable Fish Farm Canada **Potential Benefits** • Help to grow the green sector, which creates high value 'green' jobs • Support the development of new products for the province and export
Sustainable Procurement	This policy outlines procurement practices for government to look beyond the lowest cost and consider the economic, environmental, and social impact of our purchases. **Potential Benefits** • Procurement practices that are better for the environment, the local economy, and communities
Tidal Energy	Investments in this area support research in capturing this unique resource to accelerate the emerging tidal energy industry. To discuss technology in the Bay of Fundy and help commercial development on a global scale, the Province hosted a tidal energy symposium in Halifax on July 7 & 8, 2011. **Potential Benefits** • Improve the diversity of our renewable electricity supply • Improve our energy security • Become a leader in the field of tidal energy

Letter from the Round Table

July 18, 2011

Hon. Sterling Belliveau
Minister, Department of Environment
5151 Terminal Road
Halifax, Nova Scotia

Dear Mr. Belliveau:

On behalf of my colleagues on the Round Table on Environment and Sustainable Prosperity, I am pleased to submit our fourth annual assessment of the progress made by the Province in implementing the objectives and goals embodied in the *Environmental Goals and Sustainable Prosperity Act* (EGSPA). This has been an interesting and challenging year in which the Province has undertaken new initiatives and made substantive progress on some of the goals set out in the *Act*. The Round Table is pleased with the format of this year's Progress Report

We take particular note of renewable energy in which new goals and targets have been announced that will advance the Province far beyond those originally established in the legislation. This is clearly an effort that will move us closer to the long-term objective of sustainable prosperity while assisting the Province to meet its goals for reduction of greenhouse gases. The year 2010 was marked by notable weather and climate-related events which could be a forewarning of changes to come. These should be carefully monitored and should spur the Provincial Government and other stakeholders to make a concerted effort to further mitigation and adaptation efforts associated with climate change risks. It should be noted that our ability to achieve the 2020 target will rely on continued progress on the remaining emitting sources, particularly transportation and buildings.

The Government has also moved decisively to focus increased efforts on energy efficiency by establishing Efficiency Nova Scotia Corporation. By the end of 2010, this new organization was already playing a role by managing efficiency programs associated with electricity use. Efficiency targets set for the Province are among the most ambitious in North America.

The other component of the *Act* worth special mention is the continuing effort to reach the goal and target set for protected land in Nova Scotia. Additional protected areas were announced during 2010 and a new plan is being developed to enable the Province to meet, if not exceed, the goal set for 2015.

Although the revised solid waste management strategy, which was to be released in 2010, has not yet been announced, a few municipal units have already met the target of 300 kilograms per person per year established for 2015. This is encouraging.

In the area of air quality, Nova Scotia and the emitters of ozone have met the 2010 target established by the Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment. The targets set for NO_X had already been met, and we are hopeful that SO_2 targets for 2010 will also be met, as there are continuing concerns with acidification. It is not clear that the goal and targets for fine particulates have been met, as all of the data are not yet available. The Round Table was surprised by the delay allowed in meeting the mercury emissions, as concerns about this toxic metal have been recognized for many years.

We are pleased that the Province released its much anticipated water strategy in 2010 with considerable interest among stakeholders. Over the next few months and years, we are hoping to see more articulation of goals and targets for the many components of that strategy. We are looking forward to the release of the delayed wetland policy, a critical piece of any water management strategy. The Round Table has been expressing our ongoing concern regarding the delays in satisfying the goal that municipalities would meet the Province's water treatment standards by 2008. We are calling on you and your Cabinet colleagues to develop and announce a formal plan of action required to meet this goal as soon as possible.

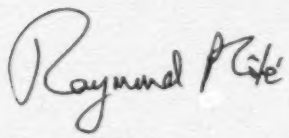
There have been delays in announcing the natural resource strategies that will provide an important underpinning of the economic and environmental objectives of the *Act* and a sustainable future for Nova Scotia. The Round Table can appreciate that the development of the strategies is complex and we look forward to their release in 2011.

While it is important to do what is necessary to meet the goals and targets in the *Act*, we understand that additional time can be required to consult and develop a truly effective policy and strategy. It would be helpful if the reasons for the delays could be explained.

We would also encourage the Government to begin to report on the environmental and economic changes or achievements which have occurred as a result of meeting a goal or adopting a new strategy or policy. For example, a sustainable procurement policy was adopted in 2009. What, if any, changes have occurred in procurement as a result and how have these changes benefited the economy and the environment?

With the mandated five-year review of the *Act* coming in 2012, it would be useful to be tracking and reporting on outcomes, as well as progress on the goals themselves, in order to lay the foundation for consultations on this important and groundbreaking piece of legislation We look forward to working with you, your colleagues, and your Department on the plans for that review.

Yours sincerely,



Raymond Côté
Chair

Response from the Minister

July 28, 2011

Professor Raymond Côté
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Dalhousie University
Suite 5010, 6100 University Avenue
Halifax, NS B3H 3J5

Dear Professor Côté:

I would like to thank the Round Table on Environment and Sustainable Prosperity for providing feedback on the fourth annual progress report for the *Environmental Goals and Sustainable Prosperity Act* (EGSPA). I appreciate the Round Table's contributions in engaging with government as we continue to work towards the goals and targets set out in the *Act*.

As recognized in your letter, significant progress has been made. Of particular note is the addition of new renewable energy targets, the protection of new land, the improvement of air quality, and the release of a strategy for managing water resources. The complexity of these issues has caused challenges in meeting some of the goals within the established timeline. Your request for additional information on reasons for any delays will be provided where possible in future reports. Government will continue to work towards the goals and is committed to their achievement within reasonable timeframes.

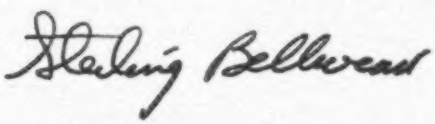
In your letter, the Round Table expressed concern regarding the amendment to the target for mercury emissions. The cost for complying with the 2010 emissions target would have resulted in significant electricity rate increases in 2011. The decision to defer the 65 kg mercury emission limit for Nova Scotia Power (NSP) until 2014 allows time to implement a more cost-effective technology solution. To offset the impact of this delay, the amendments also included annual declining emission limits from 2010 to 2013, a 35 kg emission limit in 2020, and a requirement for NSP to make up by 2020 for all annual emissions over 65 kg in the 2010–2013 period. These additional requirements will ensure that the reduction of the Province's mercury emissions is on track while balancing the potential financial impact to Nova Scotians.

The Round Table has also reinforced the importance of meeting the Province's treatment standards for public drinking water. Although the Province has been working steadily with municipalities to overcome the challenges associated with meeting the standards, this goal has not yet been fully achieved. The remaining 20 municipalities not meeting the standards are actively working towards compliance (total population served by these supplies is 21,155.) Notable progress includes six municipalities whose applications for final approval have already been submitted, and five who have groundwater studies already underway. As recommended in your letter, a plan of action is needed to ensure this goal is fully met. The Province has been working with the individual municipalities to help them to develop drinking water treatment compliance strategies that meet their particular circumstances.

Your recommendations about reporting on the environmental and economic outcomes and achievements that have occurred as a result of EGSPA are interesting. Reporting on these outcomes could help demonstrate results and strengthen the linkage between the environment and the economy. Exploring options that support this recommendation could form a key part of the upcoming EGSPA review.

I appreciate the Round Table's continued commitment to the environmental sustainability and sustainable prosperity of the province. I look forward to further discussions on your recommendations as we work together to achieve our objective of having one of the cleanest and most sustainable environments by 2020.

Sincerely,



Sterling Belliveau
Minister

NOVA SCOTIA